ISSN-0971-927X

PATHWAY TO GOD

A Quarterly Journal of spiritual life devoted to religion. Philosophy, Mysticism & Science of Yoga

Vol. XXXVII JULY – SEPT. 2002. No. 4

ACADEMY OF COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION, Belgaum.

1952-2002

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(ISSN-0971-927x)

Vol. XXXVII No.4
JULY - SEPTEMBER
2002

ONE GOD
ONE WORLD
ONE HUMANITY

PRICE : Rs. 25.00
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION
India (Bharat) Rs. 75-00
Foreign US$ 8-00
(By Airmail)

PATHWAY TO GOD

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◆ Editorial Committee :
Shri P. D. Dharwarkar
B.Sc., C.Eng. F.I.E., M.A.S.C.E.
188, Tilakwadi, Belgaum-590 006
☎ : (0831) 465701
● *Editor-in-Chief*

Prof. Dr. I. S. Kumbar, M.A., Ph.D.
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R. P. D. College, Belgaum.
☎ : (0831) 485674 ● *Member*

◆ Published by :
Academy of Comparative Philosophy & Religion
Hindwadi, Belgaum - 590 011.
☎ : (0831) 467231, Fax : 91-831-451584

◆ Printed At :
Swastik Printing Press
Huns Talkies Road, Belgaum-590 002.
☎ : (0831) 421029 (O), 480912 (R)

Articles on related topics, solicited. They should be typed on one side of paper with Double spacing. Views expressed in this Magazine are entirely of the concerned authors.

Prayer to Lord Rudra Shiva

(Stanzawise Translation in English)

नमः भवाय च रुद्राय च ॥१॥
My saluation to the world which creates all beings and the Lord Rudra who helps all the beings overcome the difficulties of life in the world. (1)

नमः शर्वाय च पशुपतये च ॥२॥
My salutations to the Lord who destroys the sin and protects the beings. (2)

नमो नीलग्रीवाय च शितिकंठाय च ॥३॥
My salutations to the Lord whose throat is blue but the other part of the neck is white. (3)

नमः कपर्दिने च व्युप्तकेशाय च ॥४॥
My salutations to the Lord whose hair are matted, braided and spiralled (over his head). (4)

नमः सहस्राक्षाय च शतधन्वने च ॥५॥
My salutation to the Lord with thousand eyes and who wields more than hundred bows. (5)

नमो गिरीशाय च शिपिविष्टाय च ॥६॥
My salutation to the Lord of the Himalaya mountains and whose figure is surrounded by luminous rays. (6)

नमो मीढुष्टमाय चेषुमते च ॥७॥
My salutation to the Lord who is the cause of heavy rain showers and who holds many arrows. (7)

नमो ह्रस्वाय च वामनाय च ॥८॥

My salutations to the Lord who can appear in a small body and with small limbs. (8)

नमो बृहते च वर्षीयसे च ॥९॥

My salutations to the Lord who can appear in huge size and is greater and stronger. (9)

□□

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Message

Gurudeo Dr. Ranade was a philosopher; more than that he was a mystic. He tried to comprehend the eternal truth through intelligence. And then with the blessings of his great 'Masters' (Gurulingajangama Maharaj, Bhahusaheb Maharaj) he dived deep into meditation and realised his unity with God - the eternal reality, and with the whole cosmos - the manifest Divinity. Hence, he made no distinction between man and man on the basis of caste or creed, class or colour. He loved all; he advocated the spiritual equality and humanitarian fraternity.

Today's world needs, ofcourse, such spiritual outlook. And, therefore, every effort done towards fulfilling it will be highly appreciated. ACPR Belgaum decided to do something sincerely to take the message of 'Unity' to the people of different lands and cultures. It is a welcome decision. May your effort be fruitfull.

Date : 3-3-2002 **- Shri. Siddheshwar Swamiji**

Thus Spake Gurudeo...

In the external and internal worlds, Physics and Psychology, the man of science sees himself in the midst of perpetual changes, of which he can discover neither the beginning, nor the end. He learns at once the greatness and littleness of human intellect; its power in dealing with things within the range of experience, its importance in dealing with things which transcend experience. If he reduces the appearances of things, reduce Force and Space and time themselves? He realises in comprehensibleness of the simplest fact. (That we can move our arm is itself a wonder of wonders - ***Carlyle****). He, more than any other truely knows that in its ultimate essence nothing can be known.*

(From Religion and Science)

Among the existing historical religions, Buddhism is often supposed to be advocating the view that Nothingness is the only reality. I have continuously thought through the last quarter of a century, though I was not able hitherto to substantiate it by a detailed study of the sources, that a great religion like Buddhism cannot be based upon the foundation of No-spirit. This line of thought has found remarkable corroboration in the contributions which Mrs. Rhys Davids has lately made to the interpretation of Buddhism during the last 8 or 10 years, entirely contradicting her original views about Buddhism, a result which has been highly approved of by such critical scholars as Prof. Keith. Buddhism has thus to be interpreted anew on the lines of Mrs. Rhys Davids, who says that the negative side was due to the development of Canonical Buddhism, which was seperated from the original doctrines of the Buddha by a period of three long centuries.

(From Philosophy of Spirit)

□□

EDITORIAL

The Message of Bhagwadgeeta

The Bhagwadgeeta, the Divine Song of the Hindus as it is called, is a conversation in the form of questions and answers between Arjuna the bravest warrior amongst the Pandavas and Bhagwan Shrikrishna, the eighth incarnation of God on the battle field of Kurukshetra in nothern India of the great Mahabharat war about more than five thousand one hundred years ago. Almost all the kings of India of those times from the western border of Afganistan and the eastern border of Assam and Brahmadesh took part in the war either on the side of Kauravas or Pandavas. The huge armies were lined up facing each other and the various kings and army commanders blew their conch trumpets to announce their readiness to join battle.

At that time, Arjuna tells Shrikrishna who was his charioteer to take his chariot between the two armies so that he can see the warriors of the enemy's side whom he was to engage in battles to win the war. Shrikrishna does accordingly and Arjuna sees his Acharyas, Gurus, near relations and dear ones amongst the enemies. Seeing them, Arjuna is overcome with a sense of deep despair due to the thought of killing them all in order to win the war. Is the victory worth such a great killing? and whom the Pandavas will rule after killing them all? He expresses to Shrikrishna that he doesn't feel like committing the sin of killing all the near, dear and revered ones and puts down his bow in the chariot.

Shrikrishna exhorts him not to allow any such weakness enter his heart. He reminds him that he is a great warrior and has got the opportunity of his lifetime to show his prowess in this great war. If he wins, he will rule the world, but if he runs away from the battle field, he will be showered with ignominy and all sorts of bad epithets. But Arjuna shows no sign of coming out of his sombre mood and says grief has taken away all his strength to fight.

Then, to bring him back to normality, Shrikrishna tells him the philosophy of human life. Every one who is born goes through the three stages of childhood, youth and old age and then succumbs to death. All life is transient and bound to die. There is no point in grieving over what is transient and bound to die. To do so is sheer ignorance. All including yourself and myself have taken many births in the past and will be born again in the future, he tells, so there is no point in grieving when one dies or how many die. Men with knowledge of the truth and whose reason and intellect do not waver due to the cravings of the senses, do not grieve because they know that the real owner of all the transcient bodies is the soul which never dies and remains eternal. He cannot be killed by any one or with any weapon. The weapons cannot cut him apart, nor fire can burn him, nor water extinguishes nor the wind can dry him. The man who gives up all cravings of the senses, remains content within himself, gains equanimity and attains peacefulnes.

A man born in this world cannot avoid activity. One may forcibly keep one's body inactive for some time, but the mind will continue to work and create desires by association with the three attributes of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas (Goodness, desire, evil or sloth) and action will be a unavoidable. The only way, therefore is to give up cravings of the senses and engage yourself in duties your are destined to carry out, selflessly, with dedication and with a spirit of sacrifice. Then the activities cannot ensnare you in their bondage, you will remain free and ultimately reach the highest state of Brahman, as done by persons like king Janak.

A man who participates in the activity without desire for the fruit of the activity is really a man who can be called inactive. I myself do not need anything from the world, but I am always active for the good of the world. Any man who knows this truth has attained real knowledge and ultimately takes refuge in me, being liberated from all bondages of activities, cravings attachment, fear and anger.

A man who remains active but whose mind gives up the craving for the fruit of the action is beyond the likes and dislikes of the senses, remains peaceful and equanimous towards everything. He has thus attained Yoga. He is not elated with joy if he gets something which he likes nor gets dejected if he gets something which he does not like. His ignorance is removed by the knowledge of the true principle of life and he is enlightened by the illumination of spiritual existence. One who has overpowered the intensity of craving for desire and anger in this life itself before casting off the body, he is in fact a realised soul, a yogi endowed with divine bliss.

A man who is able to keep the contact of his senses with the outside world, outside only, without affecting his mind, has brought his mind, senses and reason within his control, desire, fear and anger having already left him, remains forever liberated. He is able to understand me as one who ever loves sacrifice and spiritual effort and he attains peace.

A man who does not crave for the fruit of his action, but continues to do his duty, he alone can be called a real Karma-yogi, a real Sanyasi. One should lead himself to his own progress (without depending an others), but never commit actions that will lead him to his own downfall. A man is his own friend and his own enemy. If he has overpowered his senses and desires, he becomes his own friend. If he cannot control his mind and allows his senses to lead him anywhere they like, he becomes his own enemy. If he gains control over his mind, he attains peacefulness and ultimately his soul unites with Universal Soul. For him, happiness and unhappiness, delight and sorrow become equal and he attains peace and equanimity. His attitude remains the same towards his brothers, friends, well-wishers, enemies, despisers, bearers of hatred or cruelty as well as those without emotions or sentiments.

Shrikrishna also tells Arjuna the process of meditation and ultimate realisation of the Universal Self through Dhyanyoga and that such a yogi attains Him and sees Him in all creatures and everywhere. He is always near to me and I am always near to him. He is the supreme yogi who is devoted to me and ultimately merges his soul in me.

Oh Arjuna, the eight constituents, namely, the earth, water, fire, wind, sky, mind, intellect and ego together make up my personality. But, understand well that this is only my lower nature. My superior existence which makes me pervade the whole universe and all life forms is different. Both these attributes of mine together go to create all beings, originate the whole universe and also destroy the same. The best quality of all these constituents make my personality. But because of the divine Maya; a cover of ignorance is created by the three attributes (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas) which prevents one from perceiving my real form. Only those who are my ceaseless devotees can see my real form, attain real knowledge of myself and the whole universe. Such a man with real knowledge is dearest to me and I am dearest to him. I know all the beings who existed in the past, exist in the present, as well as those who will exist in the future. But they do not know me due to ignorance of Maya.

On being asked by Arjuna, Shrikrishna explains the philosophical terminology - The most supreme and ever eternal principle of the universe is Brahma. Spirituality is the original nature of the individual Self. The formative process of creation in the universe is Karma. The transient entity in all created forms is the Adhibhoot, the strength giving principle in them is the Adhidaivat and the most adorable principle of sacrifice in individual body is myself alone.

Those who remember me while casting off their body, no doubt reach me. Fix your mind always on me and offer it along with your intellect to me so that ultimately you reach me only. Remember me and fight the battle. Those who meditate on the Supreme Being with pointed concentration reach Him alone, who is Omniscient, eternal Ruler of the universe, Protector of all, subtler than the subtle, smaller than the smallest particle, unperceivable, beyond darkness and more illumined than the sun. Those who reach me are liberated once for all and do not have to born again. The learned say one thousand aeons (yugas) form the night of Brahmadeo and another one thousand aeons His day. When this day beigns all the invisible subtler forms take the visible gross forms and when the night starts they slip back again into the invisible subtler forms. The world is known to have two paths the one illumined with light and other dark one. The yogi who knows both of them, leaves them behind and attains the everlasting Supreme Being. My attitude is one of equality towards all beings. I do not differentiate them with my likes and dislikes towards them. Those who are my devotees are with me and I am with them. Therefore offer your mind to me, worship me, be my devotee, offer your Salutations to me, so that ultimately you reach me and merge with me.

He tells Arjuna that he is the best of all things and beings in the universe. He is the origin, midtimer and the end of all beings. He is the Lord Shiva amongst the Rudras, Meru amongst the mountains, Bhrugu amongst the sages, ocean amongst the water spots, and so on.

Shrikrishna then gives the Vishvaroopdarshan of his form, in which Arjuna sees the huge form of Shrikrishna which is devouring all the beings including many of the warriors standing on the battle field. Arjuna is struck with fear with the awesome vision and implores Shrikrishna to again come down to the form of his person.

He tells Arjuna that the devotee who practises ceaseless devotion by offering him his mind as well as intellect is the best of them all. The soul of an individual is unaffected by the activities of the body and enlightens the body as the sun enlightens the whole world for a man who understands the soul through meditation and Dnyanyoga. He explains the nature of the three attributes of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas and their effects on our life. The man who can go beyond the effects of the three attributes can alone reach the Brahman.

He explains how from the everlasting never diminishing eternal Brahman, all the worlds are created. Like a tree which grows with its branches upwards, this tree of the universe grows downwards from Brahman with its branches spreading in all directions with the help of the three attributes & desires into the human world. A yogi in search of the origin of human life, reaches the seat of Brahman by knowing his own soul as the Supreme being with his seat the eternal Brahman. Vedas call him Purushottam, the Supreme Being the changeless eternal entity which pervades all life forms in this world. He explains the good and the evil attributes that need to be differentiated by every man before acceptance. The good leads to liberation while evil to bondage. He explains how the three attributes affect the devotion of men towards him.

Shrikrishna explains again that renunciation does not mean giving up action but the craving for the fruit of action. Certain actions like offering useful thing to others, efforts for one's spiritual progress, action related with one's duties should never be given up. He also explains different types of knowledge, actions and doership due to the association with the three attributes of nature. A man should use his intellect and reasoning power to decide what are good actions and what actions need to be avoided. He again exhorts Arjuna that you are avoiding your duty due to mental aberrations and misplaced sentiments and attachments. But remember that God resides in the hearts of all beings and can make them do things through the powerful influence of Maya as if they are riding robot-like machines. They wouldn't even know it.

He tells him again to merge his mind in Him, become His devotee, worship Him, offer salutations to Him and "you will reach Me only" (मन्मना भव मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरू। मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रियजाने प्रियोऽसि मे॥) I tell you this with all certainty because you are dear to me. Give up all your duties and surrender yourself to my will. I will relieve you of all the sins. Do not grieve (सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज। अहं त्वां सर्व पापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः॥) Arjuna answers, Oh Krishna, because of your blessings I have shaken off all my misplaced sentiments and abberations, all my doubts have vanished, my memory has revived and will do what you desire of me (नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादात् मयाच्युत। स्थितोऽस्मि गतसंदेहः करिष्ये वचनं तव॥)

Thus, Bhagwan Shrikrishna convinces Arjuna that his duty is more important than all the attachments and affections and it is essential to win the war over the forces of deceipt and evil in order that the truth has to prevail for the good of the world.

What is the message of this Bhagwadgeeta to all men of the world? All the philosophy of life namely Bhaktiyoga, Dhyanyoga, Karmayoga, Dnyanyoga, the information about the three attributes and their effects on one's life are but means to an end and not the ends in themselves. They are the means to make a man moral, ethical, spiritual and knowledgeable about the true nature of the world, so that he can face the variety of situations that befall him, while doing his duty as a constituent of the society in which he lives, effectively, selflessly and with dedication so that the society prospers, the whole humanity prospers and the world becomes peaceful. Bhagwan Shrikrishna professes not renunciation but active life in the world, though one may be spiritual in his inner being like King Janak. He gives His own example that He is active every moment though he does not need anything from the world.

The central theme of Bhagwadgeeta namely the predicament of Arjuna and his falling into deep despair at the prospect of killing his near, dear and revered ones, and Shrikrishna's retrieval of Arjuna back to his dutifulness should not be lost sight of while studying, analysing, interpreting and preaching the Bhagwadgeeta. The predicament is in the life of the bravest warrior of the Pandavas. However, such predicaments do come in the lives of common men while doing their duties in their every-day life in the form of enticements affections attachments and many corrupting influences. They may be engineers, doctors, chairman of institutions or companies, professors or professionals or clerks or workers in big work organisations. All of them need to follow the main teaching of Bhagwadgeeta to do one's duty selflessly and with dedication for a good truthful and peaceful world.

Men have to rise above the small sphere of family life and enter the larger spheres of the country, the nation the world and the vast expanse of the world of spirituality to at least have a glimpse of the Lord who rules over our lives. Mere worships and prayers will not serve the purpose.

□□

(Continued from last issue)

Śankarācārya's Ātmabodha

(Sanskrit Script followed by English translation)

(68)

दिग्देश-कालाद्यनपेक्ष्य सर्वगं
शीतादि-हृन्नित्य-सुखं निरंजनम् ।
यः स्वात्म-तीर्थं भजते विनिष्क्रियः
स सर्ववित् सर्वगतोऽमृतो भवेत् ॥६८॥

That (spiritual aspirant) who resorts to the sacred place in the form of his own Self which, not expecting any direction, place, time, etc., is present everywhere, which carries off cold, etc., which is always pleasure (-giving), and which is pure/stainless becomes devoid of action and all-knower and all-pervasive and deathless (68).

Explanation : In order to remove their own sins and to gain happiness, people resort to sacred places. Now here Śaṇkarācārya declares that the holy place in the form of the Self is the most important of all sacred places.

Sacred places are situated at various places and in different directions. e.g. In India, sacred places are located in eastern, western, northern and southern directions. For instance :- Kedāranātha, Kāśī, Purī, Dvārakā, Rāmeśvara, etc. Some of them are situated in certain places. e.g. Prayāga is at the confluence of the rivers Gaṅgā and Yamunā. Rāmeśvara and Gokarṇa Mahābaleśvara are on the sea-shore. Some sacred places are on plain ground while others are on tops of mountains. Such expectation of a certain direction or location is not necessary in case of the sacred place in the form of the Self. The latter is at all places and in all directions. It is there wherever is the spiritual aspirant who has realised the Self.

Further, it is said that some sacred places are to be visited at a particular time like Śivarātri, the 11th day of a month, the full-moonday, Navarātra, and so on. But no such restriction of specific time is necessary to take a dip in the Ātma-tīrtha. One can bathe in the Ātma-tīrtha, at any time of the day or month or year.

The water at some places (like Haridvāra) is cold, and hot at other places. Some holy places are located in the cold regions of the Himālayas. Further, the water, etc. may not be always pleasant. Such is not the case with the Ātma-tīrtha. It is always pleasant, as Ātman is bliss.

Sacred places can become dirty/defiled due to the pilgrims. The Ātma-tīrtha on the contrary, is always dirtless, pure, clean. There is no trace of dirt or defilement in Ātma-tīrtha. A spiritual aspirant may take any number of dips in the Ātma-tīrtha, the latter is never soiled; it always remains clear, pure, clean.

It should be the aim of every man to become identical with one's own Self, after resorting to the sacred place in the form of the Self. As the Self is present in every one, one needs to go nowhere. Hence one's visits to the sacred places are stopped (viniṣkriya). Moreover, as the spiritual aspirant has become identical with the

Self, he like the Self becomes all-knowing and all-pervading, and immortal. He becomes entirely free from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth, and he is thus released from all bondage. He is emancipated.

● ● ●

Thus Śaṇkarācārya's this Ātmabodha is a very handy mannual of his philosophy of Monism-alone. It elucidates the concept of the ultimate reality namely the Supreme Self and promises to the spiritual aspirant "release while living" (jīvanmukti) and "release after death" (videha-mukti), which are nothing but the states of Pure Bliss after which the human beings are hankering.

GLOSSARY OF SELECT WORDS

Sanskrit	English	Sanskrit	English
अज्ञान	Nescience; ignorance	अद्वय	Non-dual
अद्वितीय	One without a second	अधिष्ठान	Basis
अध्यास	Superimposition	अध्यारोप	Superimposition
अनात्मन्	Not-Self	अंतरात्मन्	Inner Self
अनात्मा		अपंचीकृत	That which has not undergone the process of Fivefold Combination.
अवगति	Realisation		
अविद्या	Nescience; ignorance		
आकाश	Space		
आत्मन्	Self; the Self.	उपादान कारण	Material Cause
उपाधि	Limiting adjunct/ circumstance/factor	कारण शरीर	Causal body
		केवलाद्वैत	Monism-alone
कोश/कोष	Sheath	चित्	Sentience; sentient
चेतन	Sentient	जड	Non-sentient; inert
जीव	Individual soul; soul	जीवन्मुक्त	Released in this life.
त्रिपुटी	Group of three things	पंचीकरण	Fivefold Combination
पंचीकृत	That which has undergone the process of Fivefold Combination.	पारमार्थिक दृष्टि	Transcendental/real view-point
		व्यष्टि	Singularity
		सत्	Existent; existence

व्यावहारिक दृष्टि	Empirical/Worldly/Phenomenal/practical view-point.
समष्टि	Totality
संसार	Empirical/Worldly life
साक्षात्कार	Realisation
सत्कार्य-वाद	The theory that an effect prior to its actual production exists, in a subtle form, in its material cause.
हृदाकाश	Space in the heart

(Concluded)

- Prof. **Dr. K. V. Apte**

Yajurved Apartment, ST Colony Road,
Vishrambag, Sangli-416 415.

❑❑

पायो जी मैने राम रतन धन.....

In the song, Mirabai speaks of God as an अमोलिक वस्तु; *and as a* रतन धन, *which has been bestowed upon her in his graciousness by her spiritual teacher. She also speaks of this jewel of God as not capable of being stolen away by anybody. Now, these words of Mirabai put us in mind of a famous Abhanga of Jnaneshwar, who lived about three centuries before her, and who was the founder of the school of Mysticism in Maharashtra. Jnaneshwar tells us in a famous Abhanga.* अमोलिक रत्न जोडले रे तुज । कां रे ब्रह्मवीज ओळखिसी । न बुडे न कळे न भिये चोरा । ते वस्तु चतुरा सेविजे तूं ॥ *Which Abhanga was later regarded as an auspicious sign and command at the time of the foundation of the Inchageri Math by its great spiritual founder. It is remarkable how both Mirabai and Jnaneshwar speak equally of God as* अमोलिक, *as a* रतन, *and as a* वस्तु, *the invaluable jewel of Reality. These speak equally of the impossibility of its being stolen away, or pilfered by anybody.*

- Gurudeo in Pathway to God in Hindi Literature pp 191-192

Jyotisam Jyotih : A Greek Parallel

The substance of the teachings embodied in the Upanishads include the search for the equality between atman and Brahman. Brahman, known during the closing period of Samhita as Prajapathi, Visvakarman, Purusa and Brahmanspathi is not only the sole creator but also the sole controller of the universe. He is "the lord of all, the knower of all, the controller within the source of all, that from which they truly disappear" (Mandukya Upanishad, i.6). On Brahman, *jyotisam jyotih,* the supreme light of the lights depends the destiny of the inhabitants of the universe. Atman of the universe is Brahman. The Upanishads teach that there is an undeniably true reality that lies beneath all change. This unchanging reality is identified with *jyotisam jyotih.* The need to unite atman with *jyotisam jyotih* is conspicuous in both Hindu and Greek mystic tradition. The Orphic mystic who undergoes a series of regular purificatory and expiatory rites is known to unite with Aither when he escapes the bhavachakra or the wheel of samsaric existence. In this state he cries out : "I have flown out of the sorrowful weary wheel" (Gold tablets no.5 and Jane Harrison, p.670). This is a state of pure bliss which is compared to "a kid falling into milk". It is very similar to the Hindu view of the ascetic achieving unity with Brahman or *jyotisam jyotih* which is compared to rivers dissolving into the ocean. Similar to the Orphic and Hindu mystic is the Bacchic mystic unity with Bacchus. But in function the Bacchic mysteries are full of wild ecstasia and divine mania. Nevertheless it offers a temporary and rather violent release for the soul. This release is akin to the rapture undergone by initiates of the Phrygian mysteries of Cybele. The Bacchic mystic are offered the following blessings by Bacchus himself :

"Whose gifts are joy and union of soul in dancing,
Joy in music of flutes,
Joy when sparkling wine at feasts of the gods
Soothes the sore regret,
Banishes every grief,
When the reveller rests, enfolded deep
In the cool shade of ivy-shoots,
On wine's soft pillow of sleep".

The Bacchae, p.193.

The pleasurable act of experiencing the blessings of Bacchus culminates with the rewards :

"Blest is the happy man
Who knows the mysteries the gods ordain,
And sanctifies his life,
Joins soul with soul in mystic unity,
And by due ritual made pure,
Enters the ecstasy of mountain solitudes !",

The Bacchae, pp.183-184.

In this state Bacchus can be compared to *jyotisam jyotih* for on him depends the destiny of his worshippers. The Bacchae vividly portrays the fate of Pentheus who had no *bhakthi* or faith in Bacchus. Bacchus is the supreme controller of the Bacchantes. It is him that they imitate and his mana they seek in the feast of the raw flesh. But unlike *jyotisam jyotih* what Bacchus offers is temporary. But like Bacchus *jyotisam jyotih* is" truly he is the rapture for whoever gets this rapture becomes blessful" (Taittiriya Up.11.7). Only the nature of the rapture differs. The Bacchic are more frenzied while the Hindu are peaceful and prolonged. Both offer salvation for the ātman and both conduct ātman towards *saccidānanda*.

In keeping with the same mystic experience are the Eleusinian mysteries for it is known in a lost poem of Sophocles that,

"Thrice happy are those mortals who see these rites before they depart for Hades for to them alone is it granted to have true life on the other side. To the rest all there is evil."

(Radhakrishnan, p.139)

These lines imply that there are rewards awaiting the initiates at Eleusis. With the compliments of Demeter. Correct ritual, prohibition from flesh food and above all the *bhakthi* that Demeter and nobody else will offer consolation for sustenence in the after life was all that was required. The initiate is only expected to be put in a particular state of mind. The imperial majesty of Demeter is expected to be felt when the initiate feels that he is born from the very womb of Demeter. This birth implies a second birth which is entirely spiritual. It is a total eradication of past crimes and sins and a fresh step towards immortality, or in short a step towards *jyotisam jyotih.* It is similar to the Hindu view which administers the ascetic "to know that Brahman is Brahman" (Brhadaranayaka Up. ii.4.12). Then only unending *ānanda* or bliss will be his. The second birth at the Eleusinian mysteries coincide with *brahmacarya* or initiation into *Gayathri.*

By the time the Orphic mystic leave behind the samsaric existence and by the time the Bacchic initiates have felt and undergone the rites of Bacchus and now when the initiates at Eleusis are reborn for the second time the ātman becomes pure in essence. Now in this state, "the self which is free from sin, free from old age, from death and grief, from hunger and thirst whose desires are true that is to be searched whose cogitations are true that is to be searched for that is to be enquired; he gets all his desires and all worlds who knows the self" (Chandogya Up. viii.7.1). The state of the Hindu mystic coincides with the Greek. He is *tat subram* or the pure being. His soul is dissolved into *prajnenatmana* or the world soul.

In this state the Hindu mystic is conscious of his state of *jivanmukthi.* He is no longer groping in darkness for there is the light of all lights to help him realize that there is no actual difference between his own ātman and the ātman of the universe. His inner self or *antarbhutasaya khe,* is no longer misled by the sensory pleasures which causes the *bhavachakra* to be prolonged. The Greeks in particular have no fear of the vanity of the existence in Hades and the disillusioned fear that only a previledged few are granted eternal bliss in Elysion. The atman departs to *akasa* or the void, the abode of *jyotisam jyotih. Akasa* coincides with Aither. Both are invisible, inexpressable and constant. There is no rebirth, no *karma,* no *kama* or desire, and no fear of any kind of *bandha,* or bondage in akasa and Aither Yama will no longer speak of the fool who "thinks that only this life exists" (Katha. Up. 11.6). Ātman will no longer be persuaded by *maya* and *avidya* to follow the *vyavaharic satta* instead of *paramarthic satta*. Ātman will be able to distinguish *paravidya* or higher knowledge from *apapavidya* or lower knowledge (Mandukya Up. Ii.1.4-5). He now realizes *atmanam vidhi* or the highest knowledge with the help of *jnāna* or wisdom. Only the true self or the purest of essence manifests itself. He himself becomes *jyotisam jyotih*. and attains the knowledge of all knowledges. The Greek mystic who undergoes the series of rites is now in the position to understand the futility of birth. The Chorus in the Bacchae is content to revel in the state of pure bliss :

> "I have no wish to grudge the wise their wisdom,
> But the joys I seek are greater, outshines all others
> And lead our life to goodness and loveliness :
> The joy of the holy heart,
> That night and day is bent to honour the gods,
> And disown all custom that breaks the
> bounds of right

The Bacchae, p.213.

This is a state of mind which has no fears, illusions and desire. The Bacchic mystic like any other mystic is fully aware that his atman is free and liberated from the fetters of the body. Its existence is one of tranquility and of negation of all phenomena. Above all it is an *advaitin* or non-dual state (Mandukya Up. i.7). The spirit of detachment from the sense organs *tyaktena bhunjitha* (Isa. Up) is felt by both Hindu and Greek mystic. The accquisition of *jyotisam jyotih* is attained by both Hindu and Greek inititates in the final stage and they continue to live so.

In this state, the Orphic mystic declares : "God am

I, mortal no longer". On a similar footing the Hindu *jnani* declares : "Thou art thou" (Chandogya Up. vi.10). He is then *svarat* or king and law maker (Brhadaranayaka Up. iv.4.23).

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- Isha Gamlath

Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Western Classics,
University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.

> *The hey-day of Upanishadic philosophy was that great millenium before ever the earliest Greek philosophers, Thales and Anaximander began to speculate, and as in Greek philosophy, so in Upanishadic philosophy, the primary impulse to thought came from cosmlogic, and more particularly from cosmosonic speculation.*
>
> ***- (A Constructive Survey of Upnishadic philosophy, p.73)***

(Continued from last issue)

Bhagwadgeeta & its exposition by Sant Dnyaneshwar

Chapter VI ध्यान योग

Path of Meditation

(Sanskrit Script followed by English translation)

श्रीभगवान् उवाच -

अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः ।
स संन्यासी च योगी च न निरग्निर्न चाक्रियः ॥१॥

Lord Shrikrishna said that one who performs the precribed duty without depending on its fruit is a sanyasi and a yogi and not the one who does not light the (sacrificial) fire nor does any work (because of the vow of sanyas).(1)

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

Lord Shrikrishna says that a yogi and a sanyasi are one and the same in this world. If we look at it thoughtfully yoga and renunciation are one and the same thing. It is like giving two names to the same person, reaching the same destination by two different roads or putting the same water in two different shapes of pots. Oh Arjuna, one who performs action without desiring the fruit of the action is termed as yogi in this world. The earth produces different trees, corn and fruits, but does not have possessive ego towards them, nor any desire for them. Knowing the Self and his nature and duty, whatever action comes to him he carries out the same without rise of any ego within him nor allowing himself to incline towards the fruit or the action. Such a man is doubtless, a renunciate, a real sanyasi and also a yogi. On the other hand, one who thinks that his usual duties and natural actions will trap him in bondage and therefore shuns them and is ready to take on other actions in the name of sanyas, is only trying to remove one layer of paint and replace it by another one putting himself into unnecessary botherations. A man who has already plunged into family life needs to follow the relevant duties truthfully but without craving or desire. It is no use throwing away one load already on our head and replacing it by another probably unknown one. It is better to perform the duties that have be fallen on us truthfully and enjoy the pleasure of yoga in the same.

यं सन्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्धि पांडव ।
न ह्यसंन्यस्तसंकल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन ॥२॥

Oh Arjuna, know that which they call as sanyas to be the yoga. No one can become a yogi, without renouncing the selfish motive behind the action.(2)

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

Various philosophical theories have declared that one who has embraced renunciation is the yogi (none else). One who has given up the motive behind the action attains Brahman, the essence of yoga, is a truth proved by experience.

आरुरुक्षोर्मुनेर्योगं कर्म कारण मुच्यते ।
योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारण मुच्यते ॥३॥

The wise who seek to attain yoga (through Meditation), desireless action is said to be the means (to reach equanimity) and for one who has attained this *yoga, equanimity is said to be the means (for further progress towards Self-realisation).(3)*

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

Oh Arjuna, one who wants to reach the top of the mountain of Dhyana Yoga, should remember to climb the steps of the staircase of Karma-Yoga one by one. The first steps at the foot of the mountain will be the moral and mental disciplines. Then through the pathway of Asanas (various body postures), one reaches the hillock of Pranayam (breath control). Then comes the precipitous cliff of the mountain called Pratyahar (the ability to resist cravings of desire), where the intellectuals feel shaky and scared. Even the Hathayogis become unable to cross this precipice, despite their firm vow. Only those who have renounced the motive of desire can gradually climb up and succeed. When one thus reaches the platau where one can stabilise the capricious and ever-changing mind to gain complete control over it. This is the end of the practice of meditation and also of the craving of activity, resulting in leaving the past behind and the stoppage of stepping forward into the future. One, then, stands on the flat ground of the state of equanimity called the Samadhi, the summit of yoga and attains perfection in all respects. Next, I will tell you about the characteristic marks of a such a person.

यदा हि नेन्द्रि यार्थेषु न कर्मस्वनुषज्जते ।
सर्व संकल्प संन्यासी योगारूढस्तदोच्यते ॥४॥

A person is said to have reached yogic perfection when one has no desire for sensual pleasures nor for the fruits of actions and has renounced all motives for personal action.(4)

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

The man who has attained Self-realisation and is calmly resting in the underground cellar of the true knowledge has no disturbance from the manipulations of the objects of senses. He has no struggle with happiness and unhappiness. Even if sensual pleasures stand before him he is not aware of them. All the voluntary and involuntary activities of his body go on as usual, but he is as if asleep towards them. Such a man alone can be said to have reached perfection in yoga. Arjuna asks the Lord, with whose blessings he attains this perfection ?

उद्धरेदात्मनाऽत्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥५॥

One should uplift oneself with one's own efforts and not degrade oneself (with one's own actions). One is one's own friend as well as one's enemy.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

The Lord says that he is amused by Arjuna's question. In this perfect state who can give any thing to any one ? When a man is in deep sleep of misconceptions about the world due to ignorance, he enjoys the bad dreams of births and deaths. As soon as he wakes up from such a sleep, he becomes aware that all those dreams were false and gets firm in the knowledge that he is deathless and never dies. He comes to know that his birth and death are misconceptions thrust upon his deathless eternal existence. Oh Arjuna, man brings about his own degeneration through the misconception that his existence is because of the body, which in reality is a transient phase.

बन्धुरात्माऽऽत्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः ।
अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत् ॥६॥

One is one's own friend when one has conquered oneself (that is one's mind) and one's own enemy when he has not conquered oneself (that is one's mind).

If our mind is controlled by us, it acts as our friend, but becomes our enemy (and takes us on the path desired by the senses) if it is not controlled by us.(6)

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

If we thoughtfully abandon the ego of our body, our mind is on the path to reach the state of Brahman and we live a higher existence. On the other hand, if we fall in love with our own good-looking body, we forget our higher existence in Brahman and become our own enemy like a slikworm imprisoned in his cocoon. It is like a man who imagines he is blind and cannot see anything in front of him or like a man suffering from amnesia says he is lost. In fact if one gives up such misunderstandings, he exists in the state of Brahman and no effort is required for the same. It is like a parrot in a cage, holding the horizontal bar tightly in his toes eventhough the door is open for him to fly away & be free. If we allow ourself to enlarge our motivation of slavery to the body, the Lord says, we are our own enemy. A man who has experience of the higher existence in the state of Brahman, does not fall a prey to the false ego of the body.

जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मा समाहितः ।
शीतोष्ण सुखदुःखेषु तथा मानापमानयोः ॥७॥
ज्ञान विज्ञान तृप्तात्मा कूटस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः ।
युक्त इत्युच्यते योगी समलोष्टाश्मकांचनः ॥८॥

One who has conquered his mind and remains unperturbed in conditions of heat or cold, pleasure or pain, honour or dishonour, remains tranquil and forever dwells in the Supreme Being.(7)

A yogi who is calm with satisfaction with knowledge and understanding of Brahman, Steadfast in his inner self, has conquered his senses is called a yogi who has attained self-realisation and for whom a clod of earth, a stone or a piece of gold has the same value.(8)

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

That man who has conquered his mind and whose desires are all quietened, for him the Supreme Being is not far off. When the impurities in gold ore are burnt away, it becomes shining pure gold, likewise, when all the motivations in the mind are driven away, the self attains its natural state of Brahman. The sky inside an earthen pot mingles with the whole vast sky as soon as the pot is broken, similar is the state of the inner being of man taking on the state of Brahman. The man who abandons the false ego of the body, is himself the Supreme Being. In this state of existence, when one gets through hot or cold conditions, happiness or unhappiness, honour or dishonour, it does not register on his mind. When the sun traverses its path, all the space along its path gets enlightened and there is no scope for any dark spots. All the worldly happenings disappear in the experience of enlightenment of Brahman and the man remains free from them. Oh Arjuna, a man who has just conquered his senses, is said to be equal to the Supreme Being. He is equanimous and does not differentiate between the worldly dualities.

A mountain of gold or a clod of earth are equal in value to him. Similar is the case of a valuable gem and a stone piece.

सुह्यन्मित्रार्युदासीन मध्यस्थ द्वेष्यबन्धुषु ।
साधुष्वपि च पापेषु समबुद्धिर्विशिष्य ते ॥९॥

A man who behaves with equanimity towards campanions, friends, enemies, arbiters, haters, relatives, saints and sinners is considered superior amongst all.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

From where can a man who has reached perfection get the ideas of great and small, friendly and enemical, haters and relatives etc ? He is already in a state of equanimity towards the whole world. He sees oneness in all beings. The different adornments of life in the world are made from the same shining gold known as Brahman, though appearing in different forms and with a variety of attributes. All cloth is made of threads only. The man who has enjoyed this experience is truely a self realised man in whose company the lesser quality of persons can get their egoes banished and rise to a higher existence. Even the remembrance of the company of such a man elevates one to a higher level. If we praise him with devotion, we are showered with spiritual benefits. What more can we say about him ?

योगी युन्जीत सतत मात्मानं रहसि स्थितः ।
एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीर परिग्रहः ॥१०॥

The yogi should practise yoga seated alone in solitude, having his mind and senses under control, free from desire and possessive attachements and his mind constantly tuned to the calmness of his inner being.(10)

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

When the sun of knowledge of Brahman which never sets, rises in the sky of the heart of a man, he remains always in bliss. He has neither any motivations nor any possessive feelings for anything in any of the three worlds. The Lord Shrikrishna perceives the renunciation that has arisen in Arjuna's mind and says that he will now tell about the path of yoga adopted by the great sages and which is constantly followed by Lord Siva. This path of meditation is the surest way to reach the destination. This path takes one in the direction opposite to that of the senses. To go along this path means to sit motionless at one place.

शुचौदेशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः ।
नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चैलाजिन कुशोत्तरम् ॥११॥

The yogi should sit on his own firm seat situated neither too high nor too low, formed by a layer of Kush grass at the bottom covered by a hairy dear skin overlaid by cloth.(11)

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

One should discover a suitable spot for practice of yoga, If should be such that the mind remains calm, placid and satisfied. It should be gardenlike with trees, grass and a few birds but where one can get solitude. There may be a water flow nearly and mild sunlight. One should place a clean folded cloth over a dear skin with sacred Kush grass below it for the seat. The spot should be neither too high nor too low.

तत्रैकाग्र मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेंद्रिय क्रियः ।
उपविश्यासने युञ्ज्याद्योगमात्मवि शुद्धये ॥१२॥

Sitting in a comfortable cross-legged position, with a concentrated mind, controlling the thought process and activities of the senses, the yogi should practice meditation for self purification.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

One should thus sit motionless on the prepared seat, remembering one's Sadguru and enjoy calmness of the inner being. One should keep on the remembrance of Sadguru, till the ego is left behind, the desire of the senses vanishes and the cravings of the mind are silenced. The breathing in and out are to be controlled slowed and equalised. Thus the outward tendencies are quietened and the experience moves towards the state of Samadhi. One should have Padmasan with the heel pressing between the anus and the ureter. The spinal column should be straightened vertical with chest bit forward so that the body remains balanced. This is termed as Moolabandh or Vajrasan. This makes the inner downward wind going gradually upward.

समं काय शिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः ।
संप्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ॥१३॥

Holding the waist, spine, chest, neck and head erect motionless and steady, one should fix the eyes and the mind on the tip of the nose without looking around.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

One should bring the palms one over the other centrally over the legs in padmasan so that the shoulders & the head come in proper position. With sight on nose-tip, the upper eyelid comes downward and lower eyelid swells up; the eyes become half open and half closed. The sight thus becomes inward. The chin presses on the neck and leads to what is called Jalandhar-bandh above the diapharm and Uddayan-bandh below the diaphram. Thus the practice of yoga starts with controlling the body and the breath.

(For yogic exercises, breath control and bandhas, proper advice needs to be taken from a yoga-teacher).

(To be continued)

- P. D. Dharwarkar
188, Guruwar Peth, Tilakwadi,
Belgaum-590 006.

□□

What we find in the aspiring Mystic is that he goes on asymptotically approaching God... Instead of there being a final and perfect identity between the mystic and God the mystic moves towards God, and so we may say that He meets God at infinity. There is just little difference between them. Just as there is difference between the moon of fourteenth day and the full moon of the fifteenth day or just as gold of fifteen carats just falls short of gold of sixteen carats, to that extent only does the devotee fall short of full divine attainment. As one can distinguish between the sea and the river by the stillness and motion of the water, similarly, in the case of God and devotee also, we can make a slight distinction. "The devotee attains to Godhead, falling just short of His entire Being".

- Gurudeo in Bhagavadgita as a Philosophy of God Realisation, P.71

(Continued from last issue).

Eternity Compressed in Time :

My Reminiscences of Shri Gurudeo

We have till now considered various incentives that prompt men to desire spiritual life according to Hindi saints as dealt with exquisitely by Shri Gurudeva. Incentives drawn from man's natural inclination towards sensuality, greed and vanity, his ignorance leading to blindness about the existence of Reality, the spectacle of uncontrolled mind riding our unruly body, his tendency to sleep even when the robbers of tumultuous and turbulent passions are incessantly plotting to rob him of his spiritual capital, his subjection to sin, old age and death, his helplessness in life's experience, and consequent rounds of birth and death are likely to lead thinking individual towards God. Then there is in man the sense of wonder making him marvel at the architectonic skill of God manifested in His creation. Again, more often than not man is witness to maladjustment in merit and reward to such an extent that good people suffer and bad people prosper. In such circumstances, prayers to omnipotent God to set the balance right seem to men as the only way out of the predicament. In short, the reasons cited above definitely lead us towards the pathway to God.

But we have to cultivate moral virtues and shun vices before we can qualify for spiritual life. As Shri Gurudeva insists moral preparation is necessary for choosing life divine. Moral preparation consists of avoidance of vices and cultivation of moral virtues. In this regard, Sri Gurudeva considers two poems from Surdas exhorting the aspirants for spiritual life to avoid the company of the wicked and eschew voluptuous sensuality. In the poem, "छाँड़ि मन हरि-विमुखन को संग", Surdas advises his mind to avoid the company of the ungodly. Ungodly men "are like serpents whose venom-teeth would not give up secreting poison even if they are fed on milk." They are like a crow, which will not give up its black colour even if it is made to pick up camphor. We should never try to please an ungodly man because it is as fruitless as covering the body of an ass with saffron or sandal paste. Such a man would never change his nature for better, for "An elephant will continue to cover his body with dust even if it is administered a bath in the limpid waters of the river. An arrow cannot penetrate to the inside of a hard stone even if the whole quiver be made empty; even so, the advice which a spiritual teacher might give to a fallen man, would only be wasted on him." (Pathway to God in Hindi Literature, pp84-85).

Sri Gurudeva then deals with the next song of Surdas, namely, "अब मैं नाच्यो वहुत गोपाल" "(Oh Gopal ! Now enough of my voluptuous dance !) and points out that every one of us is carrying out voluptuous dance in this world. "We are all doing a 'कत्थक' dance, showing all sorts of sensual and voluptuous manifestations in every part of our limbs and dress." Surdas describes "how a dancer puts on a long robe of passions on his body, and covers his neck with a garland of carnal desires. He tells us how he wears the decorative mark of attraction and covetousness. His mind is like a double-faced drum of illusion, beating to two opposite tunes." His heart is beating with continuous sounds of insatiable greed. Such a dancer also swaddles his waist with a tight band of infatuation, and shows on his hips and buttocks the infinite arts of sexual imagery and action. The bells of his anklets are producing sounds of delicious scandals. And, finally his one business is to dance on the steps of the foregone evil-doers without consideration of time and place, "जल थल सुपि नहिं काल". Shri Gurudeva explains that seeing the exhibition of such vicious acts is to imbibe their seeds within ourselves. Fine arts are like a double-edged sword. They might help the moral and spiritual path, as they might also excite sensual passions.

Saint Charandas dwells on the vice of hypocrisy in his song, "करनी बिर कथनी इसी", "A hypocrite is simply a braggart whose business is simply to talk, and do no action." Shri Gurudeva explains, "The valuelessness of speech without action" by remarking that "It is much better not to talk at all, than to talk and not to do." If we talk, our actions should follow our word. Words without action, says Charandas, are like the night without moon, like a so-called brave man who has no spirit of adventure in him, like a damsel without ornaments, and finally like the cradle of a barren woman which contains no child. Action is verily "the cradle of God" according to Charandas. For instance, the saints act as they speak, and it is for this reason that they attain to divinity, and are worshipped in the world. Shri Gurudeva here recalls the words of saint Ramdas that we should worship the feet of the person who acts as he speaks - "बोले तैसा चाले, त्याची वंदावी पाऊलें ।"

(To be continued)

- Prof. **M. L. Sharma**

CAMP - 402, Rindge AV # K 11,
Cambridge MA 02140 (U.S.A.)

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'नेल्लु कुट्टुणु बारम्मा'

(The Kannada Poem composed by the Saint of Nimbargi in the Devanagari Script)

नेल्लु कुट्टुणु बारम्मा । इब्बरु कूडि ॥प.॥ नेल्लु कुट्टुणु बारे निल्लदे वेन्नु हत्ति॥ हन्नेरडु हदिनारु नल्लेयरु कूडिकोंडु ॥ अ.प.॥ तनुवेंब ओळ्ळ माडि । प्राणवेंब ओनकीले हेरि हाकि ॥ विवेकदिंद अक्कि हसन माडि । हळ्ळ तगियम्मा ज्ञानदृष्टिले नोडि ॥१॥ वासन-त्रयगळेंव ओलेगुंडु माडि । प्रारब्ध गडिगे हेरि ॥ कामक्रोधवेंब कट्टिगे उरि माडि । प्रपंच परमार्थ ओळहोरगे नोडि ॥२॥ कुदियुव समयदल्लि । मदद उक्कु । मीरि बरुतलदम्मा ॥ सत्त्व-धीर एंव हुट्टिले होडेदु । नेट्टगे अडिगेय धिट्टागि माडम्मा ॥३॥ परमात्न पायसवु । प्रारब्धदि । प्राप्तवादीतु एळम्मा ॥ गुरुलिंगजंगम वीगर कूडिकोंडु । स्वानंद एडि माडि सविय नोडम्मा ॥४॥

A Recipe For The Spiritual - Porridge

Come dear lady, let's thrash the paddy,
Both of us together, uninterruptedly;
Twelve or sixteen ladies having got together !
Let's thrash the paddy, come dear lady.

Make the body mortar and breath pestle,
Thrash the paddy hard and make the pile of grains,
Now cleanse the rice - discernment of the sand particles,
Through your inner eye;
Come dear lady, let's thrash the paddy.

Take the three desires, make an oven of them,
On it place the cauldron *Prarabdha*

And burn the fuel *Kama-Krodha,*
Look within the oven and without balance
the mundane and divine;
Come dear lady, let's thrash the paddy.

When it's boiling, the porridge flows over,
Then with the ladle of equanimity
Beat the foam of conceit flowing over;
Thus without any spill, cook the porridge dear lady;
Come dear lady, let's thrash the paddy.

You're the fortunate one to have porridge-sweet;
Having prepared the porridge thus,
Relish it to your heart's content
With GurulingaJangama and your spiritual brethren;
Come dear lady, let's thrash the paddy.

Transcreated by :
- Prof. Yashwant Achar
H.No.45, Heerabagh, Udupi.

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Greek and Sanskrit, it is to the credit of comparative philosophy that it first showed beyond dispute, that the great similarities of many of the Indo-European languages, cannot be explained except on the hypothesis of a prolonged and continued common stay together of the nations, such as Greek and Indian which seems to have parted forever.

- Gurudeo in Essays and Reflections pp. 68.

Deeksha given by Gurudeo Ranade to a disciple

Raghunath Dandekar was a primary school boy when he went with his mother to Amburao Maharaj, who was to give deeksha to his mother. After the deeksha was given, Amburao looked at the boy and said you are still a little boy, but follow my small advice. When you get up in the morning, say "Shree Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram". Even if you say it only once it is sufficient. Same thing, you say when you go to bed and imagine that you are placing your head on the feet of Prabhu Ramachandra when you place it on the pillow. Raghunath was following the practice everyday without fail.

In 1950, he was in postal service on inspection duty in Belgaum, his own town of residence. Once, he had gone to Shahapur, a suburb of the town on inspection duty when he came to know that Gurudeo Ranade is in town and is staying in Sanglikar's bungalow in Goa Ves. A thought came to his mind that he must see the man who has written the book "Bhagavadgeeta as a philosophy of God-Realisation", which Raghunath had read. He borrowed a coconut and some flowers from his friend's house and went to the Sanglikar's bungalow to have a darshan of Ranade and talk with him.

When he went to the bungalow and entered the ground floor hall, he was amazed to see that it was almost full with people.Somebody came forward and told him that he will not be able to see Ranade saheb as so many persons have already assembled to see him and that Ranade is still busy in meditation on the first floor hall. Raghunath was puzzled but sat down on the front steps of the bungalow immersed in thought. About 15 or 20 minutes had passed when Ranade came down after his meditation and asked where is the young man who wanted to see me ? Somebody pointed to Raghunath sitting on the front step. Ranade called him and took him upstairs to the surprise of all. There was a mat on the floor. Ranade asked him to sit on it. He asked Raghunath how is his Sadhana ? Raghunath said I do not do any Sadhana except worship of God at home and following what Amburao has told him. Ranade said "I can see all that is written on your forehead" and took out the angavastram which was around his neck and put him on Raghunath's head and pressed his hand over it. Raghunath says his body shook and trembled for a while. He didn't know what was happening. Ranade took off the angavastram from Raghunath's head and told him "Your work is over (तुझं काम झालं). Now you can go." Raghunath gave the coconut and flowers, prostrated before Ranade and came home. Since then, he says Ranade is always with him and looks after him.

Once his sister and her children came from their place by railway train to see him. Unfortunately, the auto rikshaw on the road near the station overturned at the turn and all fell down. They came in another riksha to Dandekar's house. After a couple of days Raghunath went to railway station for his usual official duty and saw the station master who was a Tamilian. He told Raghunath "your friend was a very nice gentleman. He came to me and told that his friend Dandekar's persons have fallen down from the rikshaw. So please send somebody to help them and put them in another rikshaw." He looked Maharashtrian but talked with me in excellent Tamil. Then, he said "the train is leaving I have to go" and went away, Raghunath understood what had happened.

Now, Raghunath is about 86 years old. His health is alright for his age, but he stays alone in his bungalow in Tilakwadi. He has sons and grandsons who request him to stay with them so that he will be looked after well. But he is not prepared to go. He goes out for a small walk on the road in front of his house, may be upto the Ram temple and comes back home. A cookery run by a lady near his house sends him food daily and he is happy with it. He says "When Gurudeo Ranade gives me company and looks after in my house, why should he go elsewhere ?" His feelings for Guru transcends those for family.

- P. D. Dharwarkar

188, Guruwar Peth, Tilakwadi, Belgaum-590 006.

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What determines the worth of a spiritual teacher? What is his nature and what are his functions? A spiritual teacher is God objectified. There is a final identity between the spiritual teacher and God. He is a great wonder-maker. He brings about a great transformation in the outlook of his disciple merely by his touch and mantra. He brings the fickle mind of his disciple under control, creates in him an all absorbing and all-encompassing love of God and enables the disciples to approach him, both in meritorious deeds as well as in realisation.

- From Message, Eternal of Kannad Saints

Comte's Religion of Humanity

Although the dreams of Plato (427-347 B.C.), Akbar the Great (1542-1605), Auguste Comte (1798-1857) - a positivist, a French philosopher, the founding father of Sociology, Karl Marx (1818-1883), Mahatma Gandhiji (1869-1948) in the forms of *'Republic'*, *'Din-e-Ilāhi'*, *'Religion of Humanity'*, *'A Classless Society'*, *'Rama-Rajya'* respectively have not yet been fully translated into reality, they continue to haunt human thinking in one way or the other. However, of all these dreams, Comte's *'Religion of Humanity'* has not drawn an enough attention of scholars except perhaps those of sociologists and a few philosophers of religion. Therefore, I venture here into the presentation of 'Religion of Humanity' of Comte in a comprehensive manner bearing in mind that it cannot be studied without referring to his biographical incidents and positive(1) Society/*Societie Positiviste* (1848).

Comte was the son of humble and law-abiding staunch Roman Catholic parents in France. At the age of nine, he displayed an unusual mental ability, a strong character, and a tendency to defy authority. In a school he won a number of prizes, and took a position of leadership among his fellow pupils, who called him "the Philosopher". At the age of thirteen, he abandoned the Catholic faith. When he was sixteen years old, he entered the *Ecole Polytechnique* in Paris. Its professors mostly scholars in Physics and Mathematics had little interest in the study of human affairs and society. But the young Comte had interest in the study of Mathematics and also in the improvement of the French Society that was afflicted with the revolution.(2) However, as a student he opposed the then prevailing examination system and brought the institution almost to its closure and there his formal education came to an end.

At the age of nineteen, Comte became a Secretary to Saint-Simon (1760-1825) - the well-known Socialist. Comte served as a Secretary to Saint-Simon from 1817 to 1823. Comte and Saint-Simon collaborated so closely that it is almost impossible to distinguish the contributions of the two. In 1822, "The Plan of the Scientific Operations Necessary for the Reorganization of Society" was jointly published. Soon after the publication Comte and Saint-Simon on account of their conflicting approaches dissolved their partnership and began bitterly attacking each other. Comte never again found a stable and remunerative job. He survived mainly on public lectures in Paris, school examination fees, from the good-will of his friends like John Stuart Mill (1806-73) - a British empiricist philosopher and a social reformer. Nevertheless Comte wrote "I certaily owe a great deal intellectually to Saint-Simon".

In February of 1825, Comte married Caroline Massion. His married life which was most unhappy through out ended in divorce in 1842. In 1826 he suffered from a mental break-down and regained his health in 1829. (He suffered from mental illness that occasionally interrupted his work). Personal disappointment and quarrels were frequent and his isolation steadily increased. He had no friends worth calling in the name, to share his thoughts, the lonely life that he was leading became unbearable, he stopped reading the works of others, he alienated from other intellectuals of the day.

Notwithstanding, a small group of admirers invited him to deliver a series of lectures on positive philosophy. Comte agreed to deliver the lectures(2) and the lecture notes were gradually published between 1830-42, forming his voluminons master work, course of Positive Philosophy in VI volumes runing over 4,800 pages. It is an encyclopedic treatment of the sciences that expands positivism and culminates in the introduction of Sociology (Robert 1999 : 169).

Comte lost his job in 1844 having criticized *Ecole Polytechnique* and yet ironically enough, that same year brought a rebirth of Comte's spirit; for in that year, he fell passionately and helplessly in love with Mme Clothilde de Vaux-an upper-class woman in her mid thirties who had been abandoned by her spouse. Comte in his late forties, became totally preoccupied with their relationship which she kept at a Platonic though encouraging level always resisting proddings for marriage. She died within the year of tuberculosis. After her death, Comte was inconsolable. His affection for the lady though one sided was gradually transformed into love(4) of mankind in general. He dedicated his life to the love of her memory.

In his later years, between 1851-54, Comte wrote a treatise titled system of the positive Politics in IV volumes, in which he applied the findings of theoretical Sociology to the solution of the Social problems of his time. Thus, he accomplished his initial goal, the improvement of society, but in doing so he considerably deviated from positivism and made an attempt to construct a religion of humanity.

As a result of this experience of love and deep emotion, Comte became obsessed with the primary of emotion over intellect, of feeling over mind, such that he began to write and speak openly of his conviction that "universal love" was the only real solvent for all difficulties of the age. He began to devise a "Religion of Humanity". (Abraham and Morgan 1985:6).

Suddenly the cool and methodical mask that Comte presented to his outside world seemed to dissolve. Comte in love was a Comte transformed (Coser 1996:19). The alleged drastic shift from positivistic and objective approach to a new "subjectivism" has been connected with this unhappy emotional experience (International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 1972:203).

According to Comte 'Religion of Humanity' is a rationalistic/Scientific/positivistic religion, where no place is given to imagination or blind faith. The traditional religions stand on the altar of dogmatism, superstition, and fetishism. Science has proved that all these are false. God lives in the ignorace of man. Humanity is to be worshipped in the place of God.

'Religion of Humanity' of Comte is said to be not only rational but also social. Comte does not see a social key-note in Christianity. Christianity employs the instruments of political pressure and tyranny in order to gain allegiance of people to it. Of course, Comte had incorporated the humanitarian Principles of Christianity. In the religion of humanity, the will, the freedom and competence of the adherents are stressed. Thus, Comte makes an attempt to create a purely social religion.

In his religion of humanity, Comte, makes mankind an end in itself. With this aim in view Comte founded 'positive society'. With the help of it he wanted to raise physical, intellectual, and moral standard of people. Religion means development of moral values in men so that they abandon selfishness and contribute to human welfare. Religious life does not indicate formal activities in worship places but in the development of tendency to share others in their pleasure and pain. This can be developed on the moral basis. Hence moral development is religious development in the opinion of Comte.

The basis of 'religion of humanity' are compassion, friendship, love, and help. This does not have any distinction of rich and poor, high and low. Religion of Humanity brings all Humanity into one fold. The adherents of religion of humanity are servants of humanity. Selfishness is sin, social service is salvation. Comte advocates a synthesis of the teachings of all religions with regard to good conduct and fellowship among men.

Comte delineates the ways of solemnity, rites, feasts, festivals, calender, the organization and the like of his religion of humanity.

Comte states that initiation in his religion of Humanity takes place at the age 14, and at 42 the individual becomes the servant of humanity. At the age of 63, he attains the status of a "A great Soul". Such Great souls are praised whole-heartedly on important days as prescribed in the 'Calender'. In memory of them monuments are built and inscriptions are carved. The days and months are named after them. As against this, the social offenders, are branded and decried in the public and every year on particular occasions as prescribed in the calender their black-deeds are disparaged.

Comte founded a World Church for his New Religion. He laid down that one hundred Great Works of the World should be accepted as the scriptures of his New Religion. He thought that its centres should be in Paris. The priests of his religion were not theologians but were thinkers, scientists, artists, poets, singers, dancers. The persons can be Priests in order of hierarchy of community from 28 years of age to 42 years. They are to occupy a place of honour in society. They do not have any economic or political power but moral and religious powers. The physical, the industrial and the political powers should remain in the hands of industrialists. Among these he accorded the highest place to bankers. But Priests of his new religion should enjoy superiority over them. This is necessary because in order to employ the political power of the common good, the politicians need to be advised by the Priests.

Further, Comte points out that one Priest is enough for one thousand people and there should be a head Priest to control the activities of all other priests. The high priest is to be assisted by seven high officials. The high priest of his religion shall be in charge of the Internal Organization of his religion and there should be secret reporters to report to the organization of the religion. The high Priest alone has the unquestionable powers.

Comte has assigned certain duties to the Priest of his new religion. Priests need marry as "they were obliged to marry in order that they might come under influence of women.(5) These Priests will educate, worship and teach science and decide industrial and international conflicts. These Priests will be obliged to impart education to youths to be able to become members of positive society. Thus, they will be sociologists.

Comte has assigned great prestige and responsibility to sociologists in his society of the future. The sociologists must constitute an academy of secular priests endowed with the spiritual power of the new positive religion. These scientific sociologist-Priests would act as the moral guides and censors of the community and directors of education. Having acquired positive knowledge of what is good and evil, they would be able to judge abilities of each member of society and hold men to their collective duty by means of education and moral training. In the religion of Humanity, "Live for others" will be the supreme commandment, love its major principle, order its basis, and Progress its aim" (Abraham, Morgan 1985:18). According to Barnes, "In short, the priests should constitute the ideal aristocracy of intellect being not unlike the Philosopher Kings for whom Plato had longed".

Comte thought of himself as the first, high priest of his new religion. In fact, he began signing all of his correspondence with, "The founder of Universal Religion, Great Priest of Humanity". Four years after the death of Ms. de Vaux. Comte founded the Societe Positiviste, an organization of his disciples which included membership fees (which Comte used to live on) and regular meetings under his guidance and leadership. Missions were eventually begun in Spain, England, Holland, and even in the United States of America. Losing interest in the purely academic life of the Ecole in which he was never allowed to participate, he redirected the remainder of his life to religious humanism for the working of labouring classes until his death on September 5, 1857, at the age of fiftynine (Abraham, Morgan 1985:6-7).

Comte's new religion of humanity is open to a number of criticisms. T. H. Huxley judiciously interpretes 'Religion of Humanity' of Comte as "Catholicism minus Christianity (*vide* for details International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences 1972:202). Quite a few Christian scholars feel that the religion of humanity is nothing more than a blend of science and Catholic religion.

The source of Love to Humanity does not spring from love to Ms. Vaux but from true Divine love. In this context I quote the words of Prof. R. D. Ranade (1956:181) a great mystic philosopher, "Love to humanity must be based on Love to God : if it is not, it is bound to have a shaky foundation. It is the Love which we bear to God that inspires us with Love to man : and those who love man otherwise love him accidentally and not enantially". In other words Religion of Humanity is built on a flimsy ground. Comte has been aptly described by Timasheff (1967:30). Rollin Chambliss as a poor religious thinker and an ordinary saint respectively.

Mill, Emile Littr'e were not willing to concede that Universal love was the solvent for all the difficulties of the age. Nor could they accept the Religion of Humanity of which Comte proclaimed himself the High Priest (Coser 1996:19). Some others have regarded Comte's 'Religion of Humanity' as highly "egoistic" religion.

Mill states that Comtean ideas of religion instead of protecting his mental health made him lead an isolated life and develop strange thoughts.

According to Mill Comte's religion does not stand the test of rationalism for it is a strange thing that can never be put into practice. People wanted him to give a science of religion, but instead of that he made the science, a religion.

Some have commented that Comte's 'Religion of Humanity' is not at all a religion but primarily a code of morality. Comte was indeed, "morally intoxicated". Though Comte is charged as a "morally intoxicated" man it is not possible to dismiss Comte's attempt to uphold the moral order in society as highly undesirable. In fact, by highlighting the significance of "morality" Comte became a guide and souce of inspiration to Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975) the great British Historian, and Pitirim A. Sorokin (1886-1968) - the great American Sociologist born in the Soviet Union.

Finally, Lewis A Coser (*vide* 1996:13) holds that the normative aspects of Comte's thought may be of importance for the historians of ideas; but they are of little importance for Sociologists. Viewed from the social and intellectual contexts in which Comte's thoughts emerged, his religious ideas have their own place in social thought.

Notes :

1. Positivism advocates that the social sciences should adopt the methods or schemes of the physical sciences. Comte develops positivism with its emphasis upon observation and classification of social data (*vide* for details, Barnes 1966:205, Bogardus 1960:243-4).

2. Some thinkers have correctly observed that Comte's time was not the best. There was war, revolution, rebellion and social political chaos and turmoil at very juncture. Events occured in rapid succession. The French

Revolution, Napoleon's rise to power and downfall, and the Restoration of the Monarchy.

3. After his three lectures on positive philosophy Comte suffered from nervous disability. He wanted to commit suicide by throwing himself into the river Seine. But he recovered after one year.

4. Comte in his later thought receded from his emphasis upon the intellectual nature and stressed the importance of affections. He made affection the central point of his life. We tire of thinking and even acting, he asserted, but we never tire of loving (Bogardus 1960:242).

5. According to Comte woman is the representative of will or desire, priest that of knowledge and the Social and Political leaders that of action. Further, he points out that priests guide speculation, the women inspire our highest affection and the political leaders direct our activity.

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- Prof. **K. B. Dabade,** M.A., Ph.D.
House No. 9, Hirabaug,
Udupi - 576 103.

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The Two Ranades

One Justice, Social & Religious Worker
and
The Other Professor, Philosopher and Spiritualist

The nineteenth century saw a period of awakening, a new spiritual experience and a new awareness in many fields of activities social as well as religious. This awareness created a deep thinking and scruting in the then existing state of things in religion and culture. The age old social traditions and customs were scrutinised, the unacceptable ones removed and a new traditional set-up promoted. This saw the rise of Brahmo Samaj of Raja Ramamohan Roy as also the Paramhansa Association, the Prarthana Samaj, the Theosophical Lodge, the social truth seeking Satya-shodhak Samaj and others in the religious fields.

The rise of Justice Mahadeo Govind Ranade (born in 1842) was near the end of the first half of the century while that of Gurudeo Ramachandra Dattatraya Ranade (born in 1886) near the end of the latter half of the century. They were about fifty years apart, but still there is a lot of similarity in their thinking. To have a critical look at this similarity is the object of this article.

Both were highly educated, had a long tenure of professorship, had a deep faith in God, besides being known for their rational way of thinking on all matters.

Justice Ranade worked in a variety of social fields and created a network of institutions to enliven and rejuvinate the whole of Maharashtra, which had otherwise remained inactive like a body in an icecold room. These are the words of Lokamanya Tilak uttered in praise of Justice Ranade's work. To remain in the strict framework of the British Raj and manage to create a mountain of illustrious service to the people and the country was an act which can be compared to the lifting of the Shiva-dhanushya (Shiva's bow) by the young Prabhu Ramachandra in Seeta-Swayamwara. All the same, justice Ranade showed exemplary courage and high capability in the service of the people and the country. Along with political and social work he showed a deep insight in the problems of the religion. From 1868 onwards, his share of interest and work for the Prarthana Samaj was considerable. It is appropriate to mention here that while laying the foundation of Prarthana Samaj Mandir a copy of the article written by Justice Ranade, titled "A Thiest's Confession of Faith" was put in sacred vessel and embedded in the foundation. Justice Ranade gave a number of discourses on many occasions of religious functions of the Prarthana Samaj. They are compiled as "Justice Ranade's lectures on religious thoughts" in the volume published by Shreemati Ramabai Ranade. These lectures are based on well-known authoritative traditions of Indian Religion. Though these lectures are primarily based on the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagwat Dharm & the literature produced by Maharashtrian Saints, his clear outlook towards them in the light of a new awareness, though not disagreeing with them, cannot escape the critical gaze of a discriminative reader.

A similar approach is observed in the work done by Gurudeo Dr. Ranade. He utilised his in-depth comparative study of the western and eastern religious and mystic philosophies to give a new look & a new awareness to the tradition of the self-realisation mode conventionalised since the times of Revananath in the Nimbargi Sampradaya and gave the same a new respectibility amongst the educated Indians and the curious western students of philosophy.

Both the Ranades found it necessary to express their well-thought out views in the English language to put them before a wider field of readers, though both had Marathi as their mother tongue. Justice Ranade produced his powerful writings in the form of "The rise of Maratha Power", "A Thiest's Confession of Faith", "Philosophy of Indian Theism" etc., while Gurudeo Ranade wrote "A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy", "Mysticism in Maharashtra", "Pathway to God in Hindi Literature", "Pathway to God in Kannada literature" and "Bhagwadgeeta as a philosophy of God-realisation."

Both Ranades had an aversion to entangle themselves in vague and long-winding metaphysical propositions. Incarnation, the origin of the Universe, destiny, the progress of the soul after death were questions beyond the understanding of the human intellect. Whenever such portions appeared in reading of Dasbodh, Gurudeo Ranade will ask the reader to skip the same and proceed ahead as there was no point in wastefully straining our intellect (तो कडबा चघळण्यांत कांही अर्थ नाही) as he would say.

Both Ranades felt that the existence of God is understandable by logic and visionary perception of the inner mind. Gurudeo Ranade said "Divine vision is possible through intuition". In the year 1901 (the year of demise of Justice Ranade) Gurudeo Ranade was given the proven nama-mantra (सबीज नाम) by Shree Bhausaheb Umdikar Maharaj who had already attained self-realisation in the Nimbargi Sampradaya. With this event, Gurudeo Ranade limited himself to the spiritual field and made supreme efforts to reach the highest experience. He made a comparative study of mysticism in all religions and philosophies of the world and laid down the science of Self-realisation as an authorised precept. Though proud of the Indian spiritualism and culture, Justice Ranade was not a blind enthusiast of the Hindu religion. "The good in every religion needs to be accepted and that is the most beneficial way for oneself and liked by God also"[1] was his opinion. Gurudeo Ranade had experienced realisation through the divine names of all religions. His disciples included Muslims, Christians, Lingayats, Dalits as well as upper caste Hindus. Desh-Bhakta (patriot) Gangadharrao Deshpande was given the divine name (नाम) by Gurudeo Ranade. After Gangadharrao's speech, Gurudeo suggested that the word "secular" had two meanings namely, irreligious and super-religious, and the latter be accepted. "One should not contain himself in his own religion only, but help to establish a Universal Religion,[2] as professed by Gurudeo Ranade. He pronounced the principle of one Humanity, one Religion and one God..... one Universe. The path of realisation was, in his opinion, the new universal religion.

It was not in the nature of both Ranades to accept any religious thought only because it was so stated by some well known authority. Both would see whether it would stand the scrutiny of logic and intellect. The views on heaven, hell, liberation (मोक्ष), divine vision, mystic occurrences expressed by Justice Ranade in his religious discourses, provided evidence of his rational independent thinking on all such matters. Gurudeo Ranade propounds that religious ritualism, religious travels and the fan fare of idol worships do not constitute true devotion termed Bhakti. It consists in love to God and through this, love to man.[3] Gurudeo opposed faith in self-proclaimed god-men and so-called mystic occurrences which go against the laws of nature like making a wall walk or making a buffalo utter vedic mantras. Both Ranades gave importance to liberation from bondage of life activities rather than liberation after death. Justice Ranade used to say that a devotee can make a consistent and constant progress in his spiritual career, but cannot equal the perfection of Godhood. Sant Dnyaneshwar said that the minimum difference between the highest attainment of a spiritual aspirant and Godhood will be that between the moon of the 14th day of the month and the full moon.[4] Gurudeo Ranade stated the principle of hyperbolic approximation in the same sense. Both mean that due to the limitations of body and mind, man cannot become a perfect God.

Both Justice Ranade and Gurudeo Ranade stated moral character as the foundation of religion. The thoughtful determination to follow the path of Karma-yoga without the desire of any fruit of action while keeping in mind the individual accountability is the divinity in a person's mind, in the opinion of Justice Ranade. A man without moral character cannot aspire for spiritual progress was the opinion of Gurudeo Ranade. Gurudeo Ranade's disciples had to take the vow to remain aloof from women and wealth belonging to others.

How the institution of saints disproved the assumption that mere clapping (during Bhajans) amounts to devotion to God and prepared a favourable background in the society for establishment of independence is shown in a critical study in his volume "The rise of Maratha Power" by Justice Ranade. Similarly Gurudeo Ranade showed by giving the example of Ādi Shankaracharya that every man with God-realisation invariably works for the upliftment of the world. Both Ranades criticised Agnosticism. Both accepted spiritual attainment as the supreme goal of life and emphasized the devotional path (भक्तीमार्ग) as the easy one to follow and achieve progressive attainment.

Justice Ranade was firm in his faith that this country of ours is for spirituality, upliftment of the whole world and the people of this country are especially meant for that purpose. While Gurudeo Ranade had firm belief that India is the meeting ground of the East and the West. "What a glorious prospect for India" he would exclaim.[5] He tells of vision of mingling of the European scientific outlook and energy in the tradition of Indian spiritualism. Gurudeo applied the method of western science to spiritual mysticism. Physics tells to start with an hypothesis, prove it by experiments and if proved, make it a law of Physics. Similarly, in spiritual mysticism, start with an assumption and if it comes out true by intellectual logic and direct experience, term it as a spiritual edict. For this purpose faith in God is not a necessity.[6] In short, the scientific tests applied to physics namely, universality, necessity, objectivity and validity should be applied to the experience of self-realisation in the opinion of Gurudeo Ranade.

Gurudeo Ranade never considered science as opposing spirituality. In the lecture given by him as president of the philosophical conference held in Nagpur in 1937, he surveyed the discoveries made by Scientists Jeans, Dreusch and Head in their respective branches of science namely Physics, Biology and Neurology and indicated how they match with the principle of non-duality and mysticism in spirituality.

Justice Ranade also did not consider any opposition between religion and science, but on the other hand, indicated opposition between science and blind faith with the examples of predictive astrology and astronomy and alchemy and chemistry. He said in the course of time both the former known for blind faith will disappear from the worldly scene, forever.[7] Rational thinking was the characteristic trait of both.

Justice Ranade's work provided an important directive to the Indian Politics. Gurudeo Ranade was convinced in the heart of his heart that politics was not his field. In 1915-16 Lokmanya Tilak said to Gurudeo Ranade. "Now you join me in the work of Kesari (his news paper).[6] But Gurudeo was not at all willing. Tilak smiled and said "Arvind Babu is also a mystic like you."[8]

Justice Ranade did valuable work in the social field as in politics. Gurudeo Ranade however believed that every man has at least of fraction of the divinity of the Almighty God. Unless man understands this through the path of devotion to God, his love for other men cannot be true and unless there is a rise of true love amongst men, there will be no true service to the people.[9] The long and short of it is that one should take the path of devotion to God whole heartdly.

Gurudeo Ranade's devotion to his Guru was well known, He used to see God in the person of Umadikar Maharaj. Justice Ranade had a different opinion. He used say "We are all children of God and are bound to obey Him. However great and respectable a spiritual man be, of the past or present, he has no authority to intervene between us and God."[10] Justice Ranade did not consider that one's soul is God like Gurudeo Ranade, but believed that one is but a ray of the sun, the supreme being.

In short, one can say that religious beliefs of both the Ranades were similar to great extent allowing for a small differences here and there. Mahatma Gandhi, one can say, is a personality similar to that of Justice Ranade but matured with passage of time. That Gurudeo Ranade had a curious appreciation of Mahatma Gandhi's spiritual career in life, is an important factor to be considered in this respect.

Gurudeo Ranade showed a constant longing for God and attained his spiritual goal of divine experience on a constant basis in this life itself and became a Siddha Purusha. Justice Ranade on the other hand, though highly religious, could not get enough time for spiritual practice and could not become a spiritual aspirant of high order.

It is needless to say that the tolerant and generous attitude towards humanity along with deep religious thinking of both the Ranades will provide a constant guiding light in these times of crisis in human culture. Is not true supreme service towards humanity to mould an individual inwardly into a morally virtuous and dutiful person through spiritual practice ? Both Ranades cherished the same goal throughout their lives.

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*3) Page 181 of 4) above

*4) Dnyaneshwari by Dandekar Stanza 1087, 18th Chapter

*5) Page 184 of 4) above

*6) Page 45 of 9) above

*7) Page 266 of 1) above

*8) Page 193 of 7) above

*9) Page 29 of 5) above

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- **Prof. Dr. Sudhakar S. Deshpande**
5/5, Chandrashekhar Sahanivas, Nityanand Marg,
Andheri (E), Mumbai - 400 069.

(Original Article in Marathi rendered in English by P. D. Dharwarkar)

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The most handicapped person in the world is the negative thinker.

The Concept of Religion According to Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), one of the intellectual giants of India, made his mark not only as a poet but also as a philosopher, humanist and mystic in the modern intellectual circles of the world. The present paper discusses his conception of Religion, which was influenced by his contemporary religious situation and his own personal growth. Tagore is neither a systematic or academic philosopher nor a religious man in the strict traditional sense of the term. He is a mystic philosopher and his is "poet's religion", as he himself declared. 'In Tagore's works, philosophy, religion and poetry fuse together beautifully in a common spiritual vision' (Naravane, 1964:37).

Religion according to Tagore is neither inherited nor borrowed but it is very natural to human beings. It is the outcome of man's reflection and response to the objective, concrete but transcendental reality. Tagore's religion is a religion of man. He says, "I felt that I had found my religion at last, the religion, universe all these are viewed with reference to or in terms of man only. His view of God-Man relation is integral. God does not exist in isolation from the universe. There cannot be anything that cannot be subsumed by the human personality, and this proves that the truth of the universe is human truth. Tagore's concept of religion is purely human conception. According to him, there can be no other conception, for this world is a human world. Truth, which is one with the Universal Being, must essentially be human, otherwise, whatever the individuals realize as true can never be called truth. For Tagore, truth lies in the rational harmony between the subjective and objective aspects of reality, both of which belong to the super-personal man. Tagore says "My religion is in the reconciliation of the super-personal Man, the universal human spirit, in my own individual being". This understanding is clearly explained as "The poet (Tagore) conceives that man in his very being unites spirit and nature. He is finite-infinite being. Man has inner power within him which enables him to realize his unity with the whole of mankind, with nature and also with God. Tagore conceives this inner power as the divinity latent in man which is characterized by him as the universal man. Tagore has preached for the exaltation of the spirit in man. It is possible for man to realize the supreme personality through love in his life-time." (Nilima Sharma, 64)

Tagore's religion is humanistic, socialistic and integral. It is human unity and harmony between man and nature which grounds the human existence in the transcendental now and here. Preservation of human values and humanness constitute the objects of Tagore's religion. The idea of the humanity of our God or the divinity of man, the eternal, is the cultural permit of Tagore's concept of religion.

For Tagore intuition is the true source of philosophy and religion. He believed that it is through intuition that the soul perceives the reality. He says, "The thought of God has not grown in my mind through any process of philosophical reasoning. On the contrary, it has followed the current of my temperament from early days until it suddenly flashed into my consciousness with a direct vision." (1931:17) The realization and enjoyment of ultimate reality is only possible through intuition. Logic and reason are inferior to intuition. Religion is based not on logic but on self-experience.

Tagore grasped the essence of all the major religions of his time. But he did not deeply attach himself to any particular religion. He formed his own conception of religion. The influences of Upanishads, with which he is acquainted from his childhood; Brahmosamaj and Raja Rammohan Roy; Vaishanvism; Buddhism, Christianity and the mysticism of Bauls is undeniable on Tagore. The basis of his metaphysical thought is Upanishads. He says, "To me the worship of the Upanishads and the teaching of Buddha have been things of the spirit and therefore endowed with boundless human growth." (1954:viii). He was a follower and admirer of Raja Rammohan Roy, his contemporary and the father of the reformist movement in India. The influence of Rammohan Roy is recognized by Tagore himself, when he said, "Raja Rammohan Roy was the first great man of our age with the comprehensiveness of mind to realize the fundamental unity of spirit in the Hindu, Muslim and Christian cultures. He represented India in the fullness based not upon rejection but on perfect comprehension. I follow him though he is practically rejected by my countrymen." The cult of the deity and devotee, devotion and love as a means for liberation and the pang of separation of the individual with the infinite are central teachings of Vaishanvism as well as the cardinal ideas of many of the lyrics of Tagore.

Buddha, Tagore states, is the first one 'who declared salvation to all men, without distinction.' (1995:69). This religious enthusiasm overflows into adventures of love and beneficence without any daily rituals and has in its centre an element of personality which stirs the human heart to its immense depths, and reveals to men an infinite which is there in all humanity. This is what made Buddhism a religion in the complete sense of the word. *Mahayana* school of Budhism seems to be inspiring to Tagore with its origin in the positive element of Buddha's teachings, i.e., to free all humanity from the sufferings and the path to this as the path of the utmost sacrifice of love.

The God of both Tagore and Christianity is a human God. Both refute the view that world is an illusion and believe in the fullness and perfection of life. According to Saunder "the God of Gitanjali is no impersonal, imperturbable absolute of Hindu philosophy but in fact, whether he be explicitly Christ or not, he is at least a Christ-like God, and the experience of his suppliant and lover is one with the deep core of all Christian experience." (1914:147)

The mystic songs of Baul singers of Bengal impressed the mind of Tagore very much. The Bauls are the wandering saints who compose songs in praise of the eternal one, the lord of their heart. They do not go to any temple or any place of worship. While describing them Tagore says, "...it is a sect, almost exclusively confined to that lower floor of society, where the light of modern education hardly finds an entrance, while wealth and respectability shun its utter indigence." (1995:79) The poems of these people express the longingness to realize the infinite in their own personality. They believe that God is special to each individual and hence they don't believe in any special incarnations. This influence of the mysticism of Bauls made Tagore reject institutionalized religions and argue for the religion of Humanity.

Though it is true that these influences made their own impact on the thought of Tagore, he did not accept any religious view passively without reflection. His religious view is developed in a total atmosphere of freedom. To quote Tagore, "I have been asked to let you know something about my own view of religion... One of the reasons why I always feel reluctant to speak about this is that I have not come to my own religion through the portals of passive acceptance of a particular creed owing to some accident of birth. I was born to a family who were pioneers in the revival in our country of a great religion, based upon the utterances of Indian sages in the Upanishads. But owing to my idiosyncrasy of temperament, it was impossible for me to accept any religious teaching on the only ground that people in my surroundings believed it to be true... Thus my mind was brought up in an atmosphere of freedom, freedom from the dominance of any creed that has its sanction in the definite authority of some scripture or in the teaching of some organized body of worshippers." (1970:11)

Religion, according to Tagore, is a dimension in human life which develops out of human experience. This experience can be described as an encounter with the wholly other i.e., the divine. Hence it is appropriate to describe the religion of Tagore as a religion of experience, Secondly, religion or religious eperience is not something which makes its mark suddenly. It is not something which gets perfected in a moment. It is an evolution, in the process of which religious experience undergoes several stages from physical to transcendental. Thirdly, religion for Tagore, is always expressionistic. It expresses itself in the form of art-such as poetry, nature, novel and also values such as love, truth, goodness, beauty etc. Religion, though it has to do with the divine, manifests itself in several material forms. This is described by Tagore as the manifestation of the Divine through the human. Humanity of God and the divinity of man constitute the core of the concept of religion, according to Tagore's reflections. But from his own experience it is the experience of the unexperienciable. "On the surface of our being we have the ever changing phases of the individual self, but in the depth there dwells the eternal spirit of human unity beyond our direct knowledge."

Nature is the context of Tagore's religious experience. "The first stage of my realization" he says, "was through my feeling of intimacy with the nature. The divine principle of unity has ever been that of an inner inter-relationship. The unity becomes not a mere subjective idea but an emerging truth. Whatever name may be given to it and whatever form it symbolizes the consciousness of this unity is spiritual and our effort to be true to it is our religion." Thus, Tagore advocates a form of Pantheism.

Experience, in Tagore, includes the unity of life, nature and the underlying divine principle. It results in the recognition of the finitude of man and also his divinity. Man is aware that he is not imperfect but incomplete. He knows that within himself some meaning has yet to be realized. In all our faculties or passions there is nothing which is absolutely good or bad; they all are the constituents of the great human personality. Our religion is the inner principle that comprehends these endeavours and expressions and dreams through which we approach him in whose image we are made. Tagore advocates the divinity of both man and nature. We should have the gift to be natural with nature and human with the human society. Religion is the liberation of our individual personality in the universal person who is human all the same.

Life itself is a story of evolution. Tagore says "We must know that the evolution process of the world has made its progress towards the revelation of its truth. That is to say same inner value which is not in the extension in space and duration in time. When life came out its elements are the same which are the materials for the rocks and minerals. Only it evolved a value in them which cannot be measured and analyzed." Evolution is a continuous process that finds its meaning in man. What is unique in man is his consciousness which gradually depends and widens the realization of his immortal being the perfect, the eternal. It inspires those creations that reveal the divinity in him - which is his humanity - in the varied manifestations of truth goodness and beauty, in the freedom of activity which is not for his use but for his ultimate expression.

This process of evolution is inclusive of historical activity also. If history is contesting nature then, Tagore's concept of religion is historical in the true sense of the term. Tagore says "In the very beginning of this career man asserted in his bodily structure his first proclamation of freedom against the established rule of nature. At a certain trend in the path of evolution he refused to remain a four-footed creature and the position which he made his body to assume carried with it a permanent gesture of insubordination." Briefly state, Tagore's idea of religion historicised nature, as one freedom leads to another, man's eyesight also found a wider scope. This freedom of view and freedom of action have been accompanied by an analogous mental freedom in man through his imagination, which is the most distinctly human of all our faculties. Every true freedom that we may attain in any direction broadens our path of self-realization, which is in superseding the self. Freedom is for expressing the infinite. Man, in his mission to create himself, tries to and develops in his mind an image of his truth according to an idea which he believes to be universal, and is sure that any expression given to it will persist through all the time. Man has a feeling that he is truly represented in something which exceeds himself, i.e., that which is yet to be realized such as the spiritual union.

Our union with a being whose activity is world-wide and who dwells in the heart of humanity cannot be a passive one. In order to be united with him we have to divert our work of selfishness and become Viswakarma, "the world-workers", we must work for all. All work that is good, however small in extent, is universal in character. In the process of religious evolution, man becomes more and more free from dominance. Man, as a creation, represents the creator and this is why of all creatures it has been possible for him to realize in his individual spirit a union with a spirit that is everywhere.

Our religion is the inner principle that comprehends these endeavours and expressions and dreams through which we approach him in whose image we are made. Man's great distinction dwells in the indefinite margin of life in him which will afford a boundless background for his dreams and creations. And in this realm of freedom that he realizes his divine dignity, his great human truth. Reality, in all its manifestations, reveals itself in the emotional and imaginative background of our mind. The consciousness of the Real within me seeks for its own corroboration the touch of the Real outside me. Man always seeks to express his varieties of religious experiences. For man by nature is an artist.

We can make truth ours by activity modulating its inter-relations. This is the work of art; for reality is not based in the substance of things but in the principles of relationship. Religious expression makes such a relationship possible. Truth is the infinite pursued by metaphysics; fact is the infinite pursued by science, while reality is the definition of the infinite which relates truth to the person. Reality is human; it is what we are conscious of, by which we are aware of it, we are aware of ourselves and it gives us delight. We live in it, we always widen its limits. Our arts and literature represent this creative activity which is fundamental in man. But the mysterious fact about it is that though the individuals are separately seeking their expression their success is never individualistic in character. Men must find and feel and represent in all their creative works man, the eternal, the creator.

Religion consists in the endeavour of men to cultivate and express those qualities which are inherent in the nature of man the Eternal, and to have faith in him. If these qualities were absolutely natural in individuals, religion could have no purpose. We begin our history with those vital needs of ours that are immediate. But deeper within us there is a current of tendencies which runs in many ways in a contrary direction, the life current of universal humanity. Religion has its function in reconciling the contradiction, by subordinating the brute nature to what we consider as the truth of man. This is helped when our faith in the Eternal man, whom we call by different names and imagine in different images, is made strong. The contradiction between the two natures in us is so great that men have willingly sacrificed their vital needs and courted death in order to express their dharma, which represents the truth of the supreme man.

Tagore's conception of religion runs similar to that of Gandhi in few respects. Gandhian way of understanding religion is as a way of life. It covers the whole gamut of life and nothing lies outside the touch of religion. Tagore's religion is also universalistic and all inclusive. Its scope is wider and broader. It covers the whole of human life. Both believed in the role of spirituality in religion and tried to spiritualize all the activities of man - social, political and economic. As the pioneers of the age of humanism both tried to bring religion down to the man from heavens. Though it is true that morality and spirituality are the essential features of religion, morality is helpful only as a ladder whereas spirituality helps one to realize reality. Both Tagore and Gandhi did not prefer the rigidity of morality.

To conclude, Tagore says, 'My religion is essentially a poet's religion. Its touch comes to me through the same unseen and trackless channels as does the inspiration of my music. My religious life has followed the same mysterious lines of growth as my poetic life. Somehow they are wedded to each other.' His mysticism is aesthetic mysticism. He gives more importance to aesthetics experience in understanding religion. Aesthetic mysticism, unlike other forms of mysticism which take us away from man, brings us closer to humanity. It gives importance to the human experience, the experience of the aesthetic sense. In other words to understand the mysticism it looks into the aesthetic experience of man. The exact description of both aestheticism and mysticism is a difficult one, since the objects of experience of the both are non-material and metaphysical. Tagore's attempt to bring these two forms together in support of his understanding of the philosophy of religion is a precious contribution to the philosophical world.

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- D. Balaganapathi
Assistant Professor of Philosophy,
Dravidian University, Kuppam - 517 425.
Chitoor Dist. (A.P.)

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God made time, but man made haste.

Book Reviews

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The Chakra Hand book from basic understanding to practical application *by: Shalila Sharamon & Bodo J. Baginski, Published by : Motilal Banarasidass, Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, New Delhi-110 007. Pages 190, Price Rs. 175/-.*

When one takes up meditational practice as an initial step in Yoga, the first curiosity is about the chakras starting from the Mooladhar to Sahasrar, which one comes across in some book or other. The fruition of meditation is not there unless the chakras open up in some sequence or other and the same event is experienced by oneself some way or other. The chakra hand book provides a guide to all such questions and gives a detailed description of each of them, its location, radiational direction and all related information in the form of tables and well illustrated figures. The book describes the chakras as energy centres through which the subtle powers act on the human body.

The book provides information on the application of sounds, colours, gemstones and fragrances with their specific effects on activating the chakras, along with meditation, breathing techniques, foot reflexology massage of the chakra points and instilling of universal life energy. The description of the nature of experiences, yoga practices and relationship of each individual chakra to the Zodiac signs additionally provides valuable insight. Information regarding the different bodies namely the ethereal, astral etc. is also given.

This book, the chakra handbook is worth recommendation for study by every yoga student and a necessity for every yoga-school library.

- P. D. Dharwarkar

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Kānvaśatpathabrāhmaṇam Vol. IV : *translated and edited by : C. R. Swaminathan, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi, Published by : Motilal Banarasidass Publishers P. Ltd., New Delhi. Pages 334, Price Rs. 600/-.*

It is for the first time that a complete critical edition of the Śatapathbrāhmaṇam of the Kanva school of the Shukla Yajurveda along with English translation is published. The edition takes into account the readings available in a few more manuscripts, besides those in the published edition in Telagu script, which were not available to Prof. Caland who brought out a critical edition of its first seven Kandas. It is also the first attempt at providing a complete English translation. The texts of the Satapatha of the Madhyandina and Kanva school do not differ much from Kandas VIII to XVI and Prof. Eggeling's translation of the former is available. Textual notes to substantiate the choice of particular readings; a section under the heading Vimarśa discussing certain selected topics from the study of the text, an exhaustive list of contents Brāhmanawise, a glossary of technical terms are some of the additional features. It is a scholarly feast for those interested in critical study of scriptures.

- P. D. Dharwarkar

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How to become a Hindu, a guide to seekers and born Hindus : *by Satguru Sivaya Subramuniya Swami, Publisher : Himalayan Academy, India. U.S.A. Designed and edited by the Sanyasin Swamis of the Saiva Siddhant Yoga order, 107, Kaholalele Road, Kapaa, Hawaii 96746-9304 USA. Published in India by Motilal Banarasidass Publishers P. Ltd., Bungalow Road, New Delhi-110 007. Pages 440, Indian Price Rs. 395/-.*

In India, most of the Hindus who have not travelled abroad, do not know about the worldwide interest generated in Hinduism because of its universal, non-dogmatic, non-compulsive approach to the philosophy of life: The ideas of God, deities or personal gods, incarnations, birth-cycles etc. not only appeal to thinkers and intellectuals as solutions to many hither-to unsolved questions about life, but also to the common people who see in Hinduism a fuller experience of life in its culture, arts, dance, worship and presence of the divine in all things and everywhere.

The author has been working for the last five decades for satisfying the curiosity of seekers to Hinduism of various different faiths in the Americas, European countries, Africa and the far east.

The author's life story begins with his parents passing in his early life at the age of ten and eleven and being brought up by a lady who was a graduate of Stanford University in California and had the opportunity to be the guest of Maharaja of Mysore for five years. There she learnt Indian art, dance, culture and the Saiva religion. Thus the author learnt how to wear a dhoti, a turban and how to eat Indian food. The remarkable lady lectured and gave presentations to the public on the beauty and glory of Indian culture. What she had to offer was welcome to the western people. At one of the camps, the author learnt the worship of Lord Siva Nataraja, at the beginning of his teens and was led into the Vedānta philosophy after listening to Indian Swamis at the Vedānt Society in San Fransisco and reading books. He was inspired by the life of Vivekanand and his writings on the Bhakti yoga, Karma yoga and Raj yoga and the poem "the song of sanyasin". His Satguru, he learnt later, had a personel encounter with Swami Vivekanand when the Indian monk visited Colombo on his way back from America to India. Following the path of Charyā which leads into Kriyā and into yoga-the culture, protocols and philosophy he started learning yoga, diaphragmatic breathing, concentration and meditation. Then he was told to find a guru, who, as he was told, was in Sri Lanka. So he came to Sri Lanka via India, met his guru Satguru Siva Yogaswami and was taken into Hindu Tamil community. The Satguru gave him the name Subramuniya through Namakaran Sanskara and he became a full-fledged Hindu. In 1957 at the age of thirty, he began his teaching mission in San Fransisco. He came to know through mystic yoga that he was a Hindu in his previous life and now he has American body, American passport and transportation from India to U.S., with the natural sequence of events.

Other religions didn't have the understanding of reincarnation karma and dharma, which provide logical explanations of so many things that happen in life, as he found out. From his own experience he developed a six-step pattern of ethical conversion that results in sincere and lasting commitment to the Hindu faith, or any faith for that matter. The most innovative step in this ethical conversion is the mandatory severance from any former faith, by the person approaching the previous religious leader, priest, rabbi, minister, Imam etc., explain to him his change of belief in face-face-meetings. The pattern was set and hundreds entered Saivite Hinduism through "sacramental name-giving", with a certificate issued to that effect. He established The Himalayan Academy with a counselling office to assist aspirants in identifying their religious loyalties and convictions. He was one of three presidents of Hinduism alongwith Chidānand Saraswati and Mata Amritanandmayi at the 1993 parliament of world religions.

Many difficulties came in the way of converted as well as born Hindus because of Hinduism being called a way of life and not a religion. This definition took away the govt. ratification and protection of religions to these people in some African countries and their properties being taken away by govt. This had to be rectified and Hinduism termed as religion. The book is very informative, interesting and propounding the original philosophy of Sanatan Dharma, which is the real name of Hinduism. Hindus in India should also read this book to understand the true philosophy and the esoteric content of their religion to mould their lives in the true spirit of the vedas and the Sanatan Dharma.

After the tradition set by Swami Vivekanand and Swami Yoganand, many Indian Swamis have travelled to USA, Canada, Europe and Africa and explained the Indian philosphy, culture, art, worship, yoga, meditation etc. and have created an urge amongst the common men as well intellectuals to the meaning and essence of life through Hinduism.

The book is recommended to all born as well as aspiring Hindus and benefit by reading the detailed information.

- P. D. Dharwarkar
188, Guruwar Peth, Tilakwadi,
Belgaum-590 006.

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"Each Religion and philosophy aim at the understanding of Self and communion with Self. They are based on the fundamental bed-rock of Self-realisation".

"When, therefore, it is said that we are pursuing the goal of Adhyatma-Vidya which is the quest of the Supreme Self, we are getting beyond the dogmatic and sectarian controversies".

"What we have always stressed is the fundamental spiritual state variously called etc. that is, direct communion with the Divine, the direct union of the human soul with the Divine."

"What may be regarded as the reconditioning of man's nature must take place, so that his Self soaks and sinks completely in the spirit of the Divine."

- Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

Activities of A.C.P.R.

Quarterly Report for the period ending 31-6-2002

I. Programmes held in A.C.P.R. :

1) Shri. Basavraj Patil (Sedam), B.J.P. President, Karnataka State, gave informal visit to A.C.P.R. on 22-4-2002.

2) Punyatithi of Gurudeo Dr. R. D. Ranade was celebrated on 6-6-2002.

3) Shri. Vijay Mahindrakar, Advocate, Belgaum gave a lecture on Indian Philosophy, Vedic and Pre Vedic on 15-6-2002. And on Upanishadic Philosophy on 22-6-2002.

4) Shri. Prabhakar S. Kulkarni, Belgaum, gave an interesting lecture on The Secrets of Life and Death on 29-6-2002.

II. We wel-come the following New Subscribers to Pathway to God Journal. (Each Rs. 75/-)

1. Shri. Parshuram N. Naik, Belgaum; 2. Shri. S. G. Deshpande, Hubli; 3. Shri. P. S. Kulkarni, Dandapur, 4. Miss. Vanamala Yadav, Bagalkot; 5. Dr. Smt. Chandramma S. Kanagale, Dharwad; 6. Dr. S. M. Kudliwadmath, Belgaum; 7. Shri. K. R. Kodagnur, Belgaum; 8. Shri. P. S. Kulkarni, Bgm. **Total Rs. 600/-**

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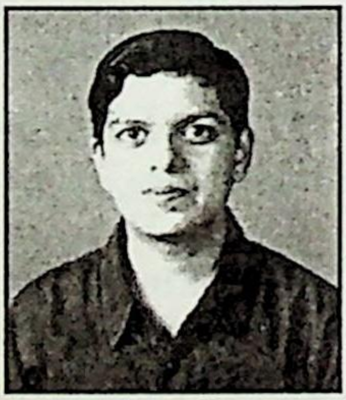
ACPR Jt. Secretary invited to USA as a poet



Srikrishna Kelkar

Joint Secretary and Trustee of Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion Srikrishna Kelkar has been invited by the International Society of Poets to attend a poets world convention in Washington DC from August 23 to 25. His poem 'Darwin, Darwin, you have limitations' is included in the Cofee Table Edition of "Letters from the Soul", published by the International Society of Poets, with best category award. The poem refers to the contemporary philosophical state of the world.

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